

## **Finance Committee Meeting October 20, 2020**

The Finance Committee met Tuesday, October 20, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. at the Conference Room, 17 S. 8<sup>th</sup> Street, Miles City Montana. Present were Committee Members Austin Lott, Brant Kassner and Elizabeth Patten.

Also present were: Public Utilities Director Tom Speelmon, Planner in Training Ally Capps, Mayor John Hollowell, Floodplain Administrator Samantha Malenovsky, Public Works Director Scott Gray, Police Chief Doug Colombik and City Clerk/Recorder Lorrie Pearce.

Chairperson Lott called the meeting to order.

### **1. Request of Citizens and Public Comment:**

None

### **2. Review and Recommendation Regarding Covid-19 Grant Funds**

Planner Capps reported that General Fund had received \$357,812.83 from the CARES Act for March 12<sup>th</sup> through August 31<sup>st</sup>. This reimbursement did not include benefits for dispatch, police and fire nor did it include fire wages. These will be reimbursed on the third cycle coming up. After a long discussion, the committee prioritized a list of items that they thought were important to put back into the budget.

- High priorities were: Pigeon control, Litigation costs, plumbing repair for City Hall basement, Architect cost for police department building, building for police department and fire department, purchasing a conference system for conference meetings, pay back Ambulance fund \$12,000 for personal protection equipment purchased and reimburse 911 board for Dispatch Supervisors wages
- Middle priorities were: Funding for the public nuisance fund, and 6-month vacancy saving for police department
- Low priorities were: Saving for snow removal cost, funding for the capital improvement fund and investing money

The list will be discussed more at the next finance meeting. The Mayor thought the City should accept the money received.

*\*\* Committee Member Patten moved to recommend to Council to accept the CARES ACT dollars received, seconded by Committee Member Kassner. The motion passed 3-0*

### **3. Review and Recommendation on Purchase of Conferencing System for Public Meetings**

Director Speelmon presented what he thought was the best option to buy for the conferencing system. It was as follows:

- Huddle-VC Kit, which has its own dedicated computer, 2 speakers (system can have up to 6 speakers), and a laser microphone
- Kit cost \$2,300
- Computer cost \$1,100
- Big screen television would be extra
- An electrician would need to be hired to add an electrical outlet to the conference room
- There was another system that cost more money, needed to purchase a separate computer and he thought cables would be everywhere and get in the way

*\*\* Committee Member Kassner moved to recommend to Council purchasing the conferencing system, seconded by Committee Member Patten. The motion passed 3-0*

**4. Review and Recommendation to set up a Fund for Litigation Related Expenses**

After a short discussion it was decided to add a new object code to the City Attorneys fund to track the litigation expenses. A budget amendment is needed.

**5. Review and Recommendation Regarding Task Order With Interstate Engineering, Inc for Preliminary Work on Intake In-River Structure**

No discussion, the item was approved by Council

**6. Review and Recommendation Regarding Task Order With Interstate Engineering, Inc for North 7th Street Water Main Rehabilitation Project**

No discussion, the item was approved by Council

**7. Discussion and Recommendation on Park District Versus Public Safety Levy**

Mayor Hollowell explained the difference on park district versus public safety levy. He said the park district is permanent where the public safety levy covers one specific item, so when it is done so is the levy.

Chairperson Lott thought the committee should talk about what the City is trying to accomplish, where are the problems and what are the solutions.

Director Gray presented his argument for a Park District-

- A lot of improvements need to happen; Finish building Stacey Fountain, sidewalks at Wibaux Park, restrooms at Maurice Hilleman complex, Jaycee Park and at the Bender/Soccer Park. Most of the equipment needs replaced
- Cost to rent port a potty for Stanley Field is \$4,000 to \$5,000 a year
- Fall Zone protection for the playground equipment needs updated

- Many trees need to be cut down in Riverside Park. They are old and a hazard
- Maintenance has fallen behind because the park is always the first one to be cut at budget time
- He explained cutting one day out on closing the Oasis or frog pool, will still cost the City a couple of hours of overtime to test the water
- If a district was voted in, that would allow the City to get more grants, etc.

Director Speelmon explained that in the future the City is going to need a Flood district. The thought behind that was to merge the flood levy and parks district together. He thought if the City improved the parks that it would bring others from surrounding areas to the City and spend money at local businesses. The City has the support from Miles City Improvement and thought they would be helpful in selling the idea.

Committee Member Patten said the City needs to engage it. You can not have nice things, if you don't pay for it. If the City could show positive results with the additional money from the district, then she thought it was a good idea. She wants people to stay in Miles City.

Mayor Hollowell recommended approving the Park District.

*\*\* Committee Member Lott moved to recommend to Council approving a Park District, seconded by Committee Member Kassner. The motion passed 3-0*

#### **8. Review and Recommendation Regarding Potential Revenue Stream for the General Fund if Recreational use of Marijuana is Approved by the Voters**

*\*\* After a short discussion, Committee Member Lott moved to table the conversation until further information is known, seconded by Committee Member Patten. The motion passed 3-0*

#### **9. Review and Recommendation Regarding Resolution No. 4370**

After a short conversation, the committee thought that General Fund could support the expense of the architect and it would be paid out of the police department fund. A budget amendment would be presented for the expense.

*\*\* Committee Member Lott moved recommending to Council to approve the expenses associated with Resolution No. 4370 , seconded by Committee Member Kassner. The motion passed 3-0*

#### **10. Review and Recommendation Regarding Splash Pad Maintenance Costs**

The committee felt that the additional cost for the water would not be substantial, and the cost for maintenance would not be an issue until approximately 3-5 years from when it is built, which would be 2022. Director Gray explained that eventually a building would be needed to protect the pumps for the pad and frog pool.

*\*\* Committee Member Lott moved to recommend to Council to approve the splash pad maintenance costs, seconded by Committee Member Kassner. The motion passed, 3-0*

## **11. Review and Recommendation of Referral From HR Committee: Three Salary Increase Requests**

Chairperson Lott said that an increase request was recommended by the Human Resource Committee and referred to finance, after having gone through the correct channels. There were no increase amounts recommended by Human Resource Committee.

### **The committee discussed Director Grays' request:**

- Director Gray explained that he submitted his request on February 3<sup>rd</sup>, before the due date of March 13<sup>th</sup>. The date was set so the request could be discussed before budget time, but the request went to Human Resources several times. There were several issues with the process and they had to be solved before a decision was made. Now budget is set, but again the request was submitted way before budget time. He is asking for a 4% increase, which would cost general fund an additional \$500.48 a year. He had not received an increase in the last three years, and if you compare the increase to the consumer price index, it would be less than the overall cost of living for those three years. He said he could find the cuts in the Parks budget to cover the increase. He asked, if the increase was approved that it be retroactive back to July 1, 2020
- Director Speelmon reminded the Finance Committee that the Human Resource Committee recommended the request to Finance based on merit. Now it was the Finance Committees' obligation to figure out if the City could afford the raise request
- Committee Member Kassner said what it comes down to is does the Park want to spend money on wages or equipment. He felt that the increase would be permanent and there are a lot of needs in all areas of general fund
- The committee compared a 4% increase to a 2.5% increase. The 4% would cost general fund \$500.48 and the 2.5% increase would cost \$312.80

*\*\* Committee Member Kassner moved to recommend to Council to approve a 2.5% increase, seconded by Committee Member Lott.*

Director Gray felt that \$200 more is not a huge amount and asked the committee to approve the 4% that he is asking for.

Committee member Patten thought the request of 4% should be recommended to get the position to a level playing field, and that is what Director Gray is asking for because he has not had a raise in three years. If we want to keep good people in Miles City, we need to take care of good people who take care of our citizens.

*\*\* Committee Member Patten moved to amend the recommendation to 4%, seconded by Committee Member Lott. The amended motion **passed** 2-1, with Committee Member Kassner voting no*

*\*\* The amended main motion **passed**, 2-1 with Committee Member Kassner voting no*

**The committee discussed Administrator Malenovsky' request:**

- Administrator Malenovsky explained she is requesting a \$2.00 to \$3.00 increase in her hourly wage. The spreadsheet breaks it out to include the cost of health insurance, etc. She has through the years as the Floodplain Administrator, cut her budget when asked, and found ways to come in under budget every year. She felt she could find a cost savings of \$2,000 to her budget if the request was approved. She said her position has odd jobs attached to it and there is really no other City to compare it to, but the closest one is in Glendive. If you compare wages to that position, her wages are below it.
- The committee discussed the cost difference between \$2.00 versus \$3.00. A \$2.00 increase would cost general fund approximately \$1,945 a year and a \$3.00 increase would cost approximately \$2,900 a year.
- It was discussed by the committee that the position is below the wage study and felt the wage needed to be increased to keep her working for the City, because it would be hard to replace her with the knowledge she has. Committee Member Kassner said his only concern is the money coming out of general fund. There are a lot of projects coming up that will cost the City money.

*\*\* Committee Member Lott moved to recommend to Council to approve a \$2.00 increase, seconded by Committee Member Patten. The motion **passed**, 2-1 with Committee Member Kassner voting no*

**The committee discussed Chief Colombik request:**

- Chief Colombik presented a base wage survey that he conducted in February. The survey showed the average monthly base wage from seventeen other agencies in the state . The average was \$6,341.84 compared to his wage of \$5,602.00. The average hourly base wage was \$36.58 compared to his wages of \$32.31 a difference of 13%. Chief Colombik requested that he is put under a contract for 2-3 years to implement wages up to the average of \$8,080 a month. He said if the City does not do anything that when he retires, it is going to be hard to hire anyone with experience for his position. He would like to stick it out for 5-8 more years.

*\*\* Committee Member Patten moved to recommend to Council to bring the wage up to average of \$6,341.84 monthly, seconded by Committee Member Lott. The motion **passed**, 2-1 with Committee Member Kassner voting no*

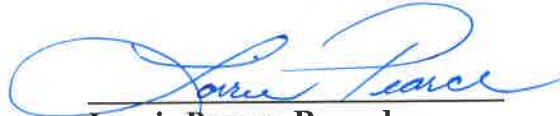
**12. Adjournment**

*\*\* Committee Member Patten moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Committee Member Kassner and **passed** unanimously.*

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Handwritten signature of Austin Lott in blue ink.

Austin Lott, Committee Chairperson

Handwritten signature of Lorrie Pearce in blue ink.

Lorrie Pearce, Recorder